

**Title:** Customer Engagement Behaviour on Social Media Platforms: A systematic literature review.

**Proposed short title:** Systematic Literature Review of CEB in Social Media Platforms.

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# **Customer Engagement Behaviour on Social Media Platforms: A systematic literature review**

## **Abstract**

Customer engagement behaviours (CEB) on social media have the potential to strengthen relationships between firms and customers. However there have been no systematic attempts to review the antecedents of CEB on social media despite wide recognition of its importance. Using a systematic literature review method, we provide an in-depth analysis of the extant empirical literature on CEB in relation to social media platforms. Results indicate that five key antecedent causes are identified in the literature: (1) Social links; (2) Ownership-value; (3) Search for information; (4) Involvement; and (5) Functionality represent the key antecedents of engagement for firms using social media. Our review is the first that brings together an in-depth secondary data analysis of the antecedents of CEB in social media platforms. We subsequently identify three epistemological tensions within the corpus and suggest directions for future research in order to advance the understanding of CEB in relation to social media.

## **Keywords**

Customer engagement behaviour; Social media; Social media platforms; Systematic literature review.

## Introduction

The Internet has provided new opportunities for customer engagement with firms. It has helped remove the necessity of physical person-to-person communication and consequently “word of mouth” has become important as “word of mouse” (Stokes & Nelson, 2013) or “electronic word of mouth” (e-WOM)” (Bulearca & Bulearca, 2010). WoM communications are an ancient mechanism for forming human social groups (Dellarocas, 2003). In a contemporary marketing context, WoM is identified simply as communication between consumers regarding goods and services, independent of commercial influence (Litvin, Goldsmith, & Pan, 2008). Keller (2007) suggests WoM is the most important and effective channel for communication between consumers, and when communicated over a digital platform, creates new ways for organisations to capture and analyse the influence one consumer can have on another (Litvin *et al.*, 2008). These methods are especially relevant to social networking platforms i.e. virtual domains in which people can interact and socialise.

Customer engagement behaviour can be defined as a “manifestation that has a brand or firm focus, beyond purchase, resulting from motivational drivers” (van Doorn, Lemon, Mittal, Nass, Pick, Pirner, & Verhoef, 2010, p. 254). We follow the position of van Doorn *et al.* (2010), noting that a customer’s behavioural manifestation may be positive or negative and can arise from a variety of motivational states. In recent years, there has been increasing focus on customer engagement as it has the potential for enhancing consumer relationships, profitability and growth (Hollebeek, 2011). Building customer engagement within an organisation requires adaptation of the existing marketing mix to take advantage of new technologies and platforms and to better understand and serve customers (De Vries & Carlson, 2014). The business environment can be complex and competitive as firms seek various strategies for growth, with social media often being relied on as a potential source of competitive advantage (Franco, Haase, & Pereira, 2016). Social media can offer an opportunity to engage with customers and achieve greater reach as the nature of social media platforms allows organisations to extend relationships with existing customers and communicate with new ones, with the facility for customers to collaborate by identification of ideas and business solutions (De Vries & Carlson, 2014). Nonetheless, scholarly enquiry into addressing the concept of CEB in relation to social media is limited (Barger, Peltier, & Schultz, 2016). This paper responds to the call for an explicit review into investigating customer engagement behaviour (van Doorn *et al.*, 2010, Brodie, Hollebeek, Jurić & Ilić, 2011).

This paper addresses the need for research to identify the antecedents of Customer Engagement Behaviour (CEB) in relation to social media platforms. Using a systematic literature review process, we explore how researchers have conceptualised and investigated *Customer Engagement Behaviour* (CEB) and the behavioural forms of engagement exhibited on social media platforms. The objective of this systematic literature review is threefold. First, to present an in-depth summary of CEB research in the digital context; second, to provide a qualitative synthesis of the studies on engagement literature; finally, to identify the antecedent causes of CEB exhibited on social media platforms.

The paper is structured into 5 main sections. The first section provides a background into CEB in the context of social media. Secondly, the methods undertaken to explore the engagement literature systematically are provided. Next, this is followed by the results obtained from undertaking a systematic review of the engagement literature. Then, an analysis and discussion of the results of the systematic review are provided in the following section. Finally, areas for future research into CEB are then presented.

## Background

The term *engagement* has been used in the academic literature since 2005 and has become increasingly popular in conceptual and empirical studies alike (Bowden, 2009; van Doorn et al., 2010). Guesalaga (2015, p. 75) defines customer engagement on social media as “the extent to which the organization’s important customers are active in using social media tools”. In line with this, Schivinski, Christodoulides, & Dabrowski (2016, p. 4) notes that “consumers use an array of tools and resources to engage with brands”. Thus, activities related to a brand on social media can entail different behavioural manifestations of engagement. The qualitatively varied forms of customer engagement on social media can be classified according to the COBRA typology (consumer online brand related activities) according to whether the activity exhibits one of three dimensions: content *consumption*, *contribution* or *creation* (Schivinski et al., 2016).

In addition to the behavioural manifestations of engagement on social media, Azar, Machado, Vacas-de-Carvalho, & Mendes (2016, p. 154, cited in Christodoulides, 2008) argues that “consumer interactions with brands have a much stronger impact on consumer behaviour compared with traditional forms of communication”. As a result, significant power has shifted from brands directly to consumers (Azar et al., 2016). Social media has transformed online customer behaviour, as consumers now often depend on each other more than on companies for information and this has important consequences for firms, products and brands (Munitnga, Moorman, & Smit, 2011). CEB on social media goes beyond financial transactions and incorporates a wide range of examples. The behavioural manifestations can be positive (e.g. posting a brand message on a blog) or negative (e.g. organizing public actions against a firm) and include posting, commenting, sharing and liking (van Doorn et al., 2010). Consequently, engaged customers play a key role in marketing activity by providing referrals or recommendations for specific products, services and brands to other potential consumers. In addition, although customer engagement behaviours have a brand/firm focus, they may be targeted to a much broader network of actors, current and potential customers. Customer engagement as a process includes commitment for new customers, increased levels of involvement, increased levels of trust for repeat purchase customers and the development of affective commitment towards the brand, leading to a state of brand loyalty (Bowden, 2009). Despite the increasing importance of CEB on social media for firms, there is yet no existing systematic review of the antecedent causes of the phenomena. In order to redress this knowledge gap, we undertook a systematic review of the literature to identify antecedent causes identified through empirical study, and subsequently to provide a qualitative synthesis of the contemporary engagement literature. In the following section we outline the method used to generate a corpus of extant literature.

## Method

The PRISMA protocol informed the article selection process (preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses). It is an evidence-based approach originally developed in healthcare research (but now also used in management and consumer behaviour research e.g. ter Huurne, 2017) for reporting systematic reviews that documents a clear protocol for inclusion criteria (Moher, Liberati, Tetzlaff, & Altman, 2009). Review protocols help protect against arbitrary decision making during the review, and also to enable the reader to assess the presence of selective reporting, by illustrating a clear process which can be replicated. One dominant academic database; Google Scholar, was explored to identify articles on CEB. As previous research has shown that Google Scholar is the most comprehensive and exhaustive academic search engine. With 389 million records, it provides the greatest volume of scholarly information (Gusenbauer, 2018). Articles were identified in the “article title, abstract and

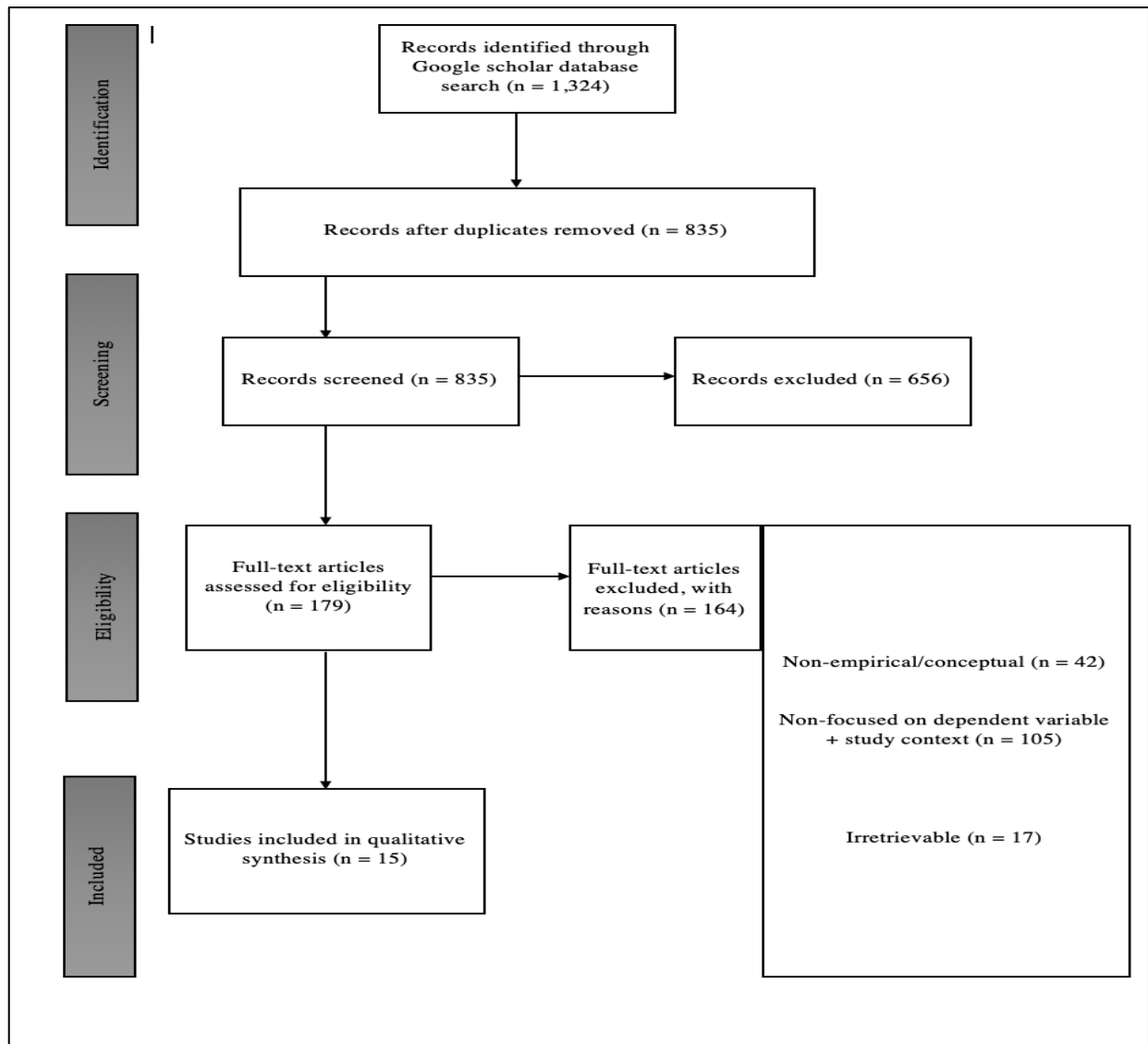
keywords” section of the database using the dependent variable “Customer engagement behaviour” OR “Customer engagement behavior” (to capture US/UK variations of spelling) and the study context “Social media” OR “Social network”, as shown in Table 1 below:

**Table 1 Final search term mechanisms**

<b>Block</b>	<b>Search term entered in topic field</b>
Dependent Variable	“Customer engagement behaviour” OR “Customer engagement behavior” AND
Study Context	“Social media” OR “Social network”

To keep the research process specific to the theoretical focus of “CEB” and “Social media”, the above blocks of keywords were used with the criteria of reporting data solely focused on the dependent variable and the study context. As shown in Figure 1, a total of 1,324 articles were identified through the selected search criteria, of which only 15 papers survived to be included in qualitative synthesis for a final analysis. The study excludes reports, master/doctoral dissertations, textbooks, conference papers and conceptual papers. The identified 1,324 articles were documented in Microsoft Excel and duplicate articles were removed, leaving 835 articles for further screening. The 835 articles were screened according to the “Title”, “Abstract” and “Conclusion”, guided by the dependent variable and study context. Through the screening of 835 articles, 656 articles were excluded because they were not explicitly relevant, and 179 articles remained. A detailed eligibility evaluation of 179 articles was conducted (full papers were read) to ascertain the relevance of the articles to the theoretical focus of the review. 164 studies were excluded on assessment of the full-text version of the studies, resulting in a final set of 15 studies for qualitative synthesis. The exclusion of so many articles results from the fact that a broad search strategy was used to ensure no relevant studies were excluded. Figure 1 shown below provides an overview of the process and shows that most of the articles were deemed irrelevant due to the dependent variable and study context (n = 105) and the remainder of the studies were non-empirical papers (n = 42), irretrievable (n = 17).

**Figure 1** PRISMA article selection process

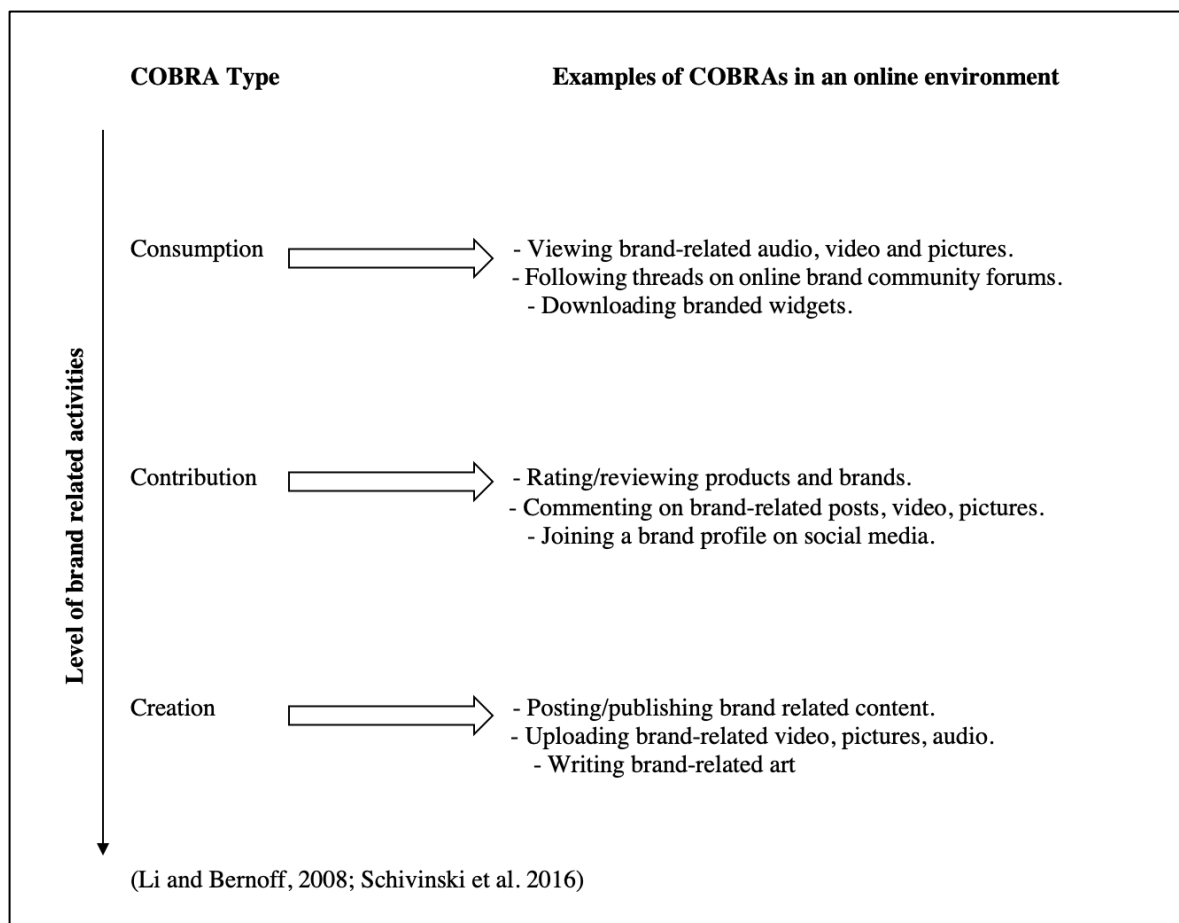


A comprehensive classification of the final set of studies was designed in order to analyse the antecedent causes of CEB and the means through which those causes were established (See Table 2 for results). The studies are categorised according to: research methodology, research philosophy, type of social media platforms investigated, type of engagement behaviour investigated, independent variable established, conceptualisations of CEB, and the object engagement behaviours are directed towards e.g. ‘brand’, ‘company’, or ‘community’. The noteworthy results from the classification table show that; there are several types of behaviours exhibited online and the objects of engagement these behaviours are targeted towards are not necessarily brands. In addition, CEB is conceptualised by the studies in several ways.

The analysis was guided by the COBRA typology mentioned earlier, which demonstrates that there are qualitatively different forms of CEB which can be exhibited by consumers in an online environment. CEBs can be classified into three types: *Contributing*, *Consuming* and *Creating*. COBRA is defined as “a set of online activities on the part of the consumer that is related to a brand, varying in the levels on interaction and engagement with the consumption, contribution and creation of media content” (Schivinski et al., 2016, p. 5), (See Figure 2 for several examples).

When a customer “comments” on a post or “likes” a piece of brand content, this is represented as *contribution* (Muntinga et al., 2011; Schivinski et al., 2016). When a customer engages with media online by “sharing” a post related to a brand, this is termed as *consumption* (Muntinga et al., 2011; Schivinski et al., 2016). Finally, when a customer “posts” or uploads brand content, e.g. a product, this is highlighted as *creation* (Muntinga et al., 2011; Schivinski et al., 2016). The antecedents of these COBRA types have been described previously as motivations in the literature. In regards to consumption; this behaviour is motivated by information, entertainment and remuneration; contribution by personal identity, integration/social interaction and entertainment. Finally, creation is motivated by personal identity, integration/social interaction, empowerment and entertainment (See Muntinga et al. 2011). These typologies of behaviour online form the basic units of analysis in the review of CEB in the literature. According to the presence/absence of an explicit categorisation of CEB by individual authors, the reviewer made an informed judgement according to the COBRA model.

**Figure 2** COBRA Types in an online environment



The selected papers were analysed in two ways: (1) We used the aforementioned classification scheme to deductively generate *a priori* codes and facilitate comparison of design, methodology, and results for all papers within the corpus (as seen in Table 2); and (2) We carefully examined each paper within the corpus of 15 identified manuscripts and conducted a comparative analysis of the manuscripts in terms of the antecedent causes of CEB. This was conducted in order to understand the causes that are said to influence the exhibition of CEB on social media platforms in the literature.

## Results

Before 2012 CEB on social media received very little empirical investigation, suggesting it is a relatively recent novelty within the literature. As evident from Table 2, the research on CEB has nonetheless gained significant pace. It is evident that scholarly attention has focused primarily on quantitative and confirmatory studies of the subject. The reason for this outcome could be the development of customer engagement scales - proposed by Hollebeek et al., (2014) – which highlighted the need for scholarly enquiry into the engagement construct and encouraged further empirical scrutiny.

The most commonly investigated type of CEB is *Contribution* i.e. when a customer comments or likes a form of pre-existing brand content. This COBRA type includes both peer-to-content and peer-to-peer interactions with brands (Shao, 2009). Its popularity amongst the studies may be due to its interactive nature of “liking” and “commenting” which can be said to be the most common behaviour exhibited across social media platforms and often one of the easiest interactions on which to obtain data through Web scraping.

The high-level results show that engagement behaviours of consumption, creation and contribution are directed towards not only brands or companies, they are also exhibited in online brand communities (See Table 2). Brand communities are “social entities that reflect the situated embeddedness of brands in the day-to-day lives of consumers and the ways in which brands connect the consumer to the brand, and the consumer to consumer” (Muniz & O’guinn, 2001, p. 418). Previously, brand communities were largely restricted to offline meetings and thus bounded geographically. However, the broader spatiotemporal interactions made possible by the web have given previously disparate users new communication channels to establish brand communities (Madupu & Cooley, 2010).

The results demonstrate competing conceptualisations of CEB on social media within the literature, many of which are based on definitions and theoretical foundations already established in the engagement literature. Most notable within the corpus is van Doorn et al.’s (2010, p. 254) conceptualisation in which “CEB go beyond transactions and may be specifically defined as a customer’s behavioural manifestation that have a brand or firm focus beyond purchase, resulting from motivational drivers”. From the final set, nine studies specifically reference the aforementioned conceptualisation of CEB by van Doorn et al., (2010). Additionally, several studies go a step further by including the multi-dimensionality of the construct as not only behavioural, but cognitive and emotional. The rest of the studies express CEB as transaction-related behaviours beyond transactions and involving actions such as sharing, advocating and co-developing (See Table 2). In summary, the conceptualisations of CEB from the final set of studies shows the influence of Bowden’s (2009), van Doorn et al.’s (2010) and Hollebeek’s (2011) seminal work on the foundations of engagement. In the following table we present the classification scheme applied to CEB papers to generate initial coding. This is followed by an in-depth inductive review of the interpretation of antecedent causes of CEB.



**Table 2 Classification Scheme applied to CEB Corpus**

Author	Year	Research Method	Research Philosophy	Type of Social Media Platform	Type of engagement behaviour(s)	Independent Variable	Definition of "CEB"	Focal Engagement Object
Oh et al	2017	Ordinary least square regression model	(Irretrievable)	Facebook, YouTube, Twitter	Contribution	Personal and Interactive in U.S movie box office	Consumer's behavioural manifestation toward an organization or a brand as a result of motivational drivers	Brand
Kabadayi and Price	2014	Questionnaire	(Irretrievable)	Facebook	Contribution	Extraversion, Neuroticism, Openness to experiences in Generation Y users	A customer's behavioural manifestations that have a brand focus, beyond purchase, resulting from motivational drivers	Brand
Bitter et al	2014	Online Questionnaire	(Irretrievable)	Facebook	Creation, Contribution, Consumption	Attitude, Perceived behavioral control, Subjective norm in users originating from Europe	A customer's behavioural manifestations that have a brand or firm focus, beyond purchase	Company/Brand
Bitter and Kräuter	2016	Online Experiment	(Irretrievable)	Facebook	Contribution, Creation	Valence, Tie strength in the restaurant sector	The behavioral dimension of customer engagement	Brand
Gong	2018	Online Survey	(Irretrievable)	Firm-managed online brand community	Contribution, Consumption	Brand ownership in a cross-cultural context	Customer behavior toward a brand that goes beyond mere purchase behavior	Brand
Carlson et al.	2018	Survey	(Irretrievable)	Facebook	Consumption, Contribution	Content Quality, Brand page interactivity, Brand page sociability, Customer contact quality in Innovation development	Customer's behavioural manifestations that have a brand focus, beyond purchase, resulting from motivational drivers that add value to the firm	Brand
Carlson et al.	2017	Online Survey	(Irretrievable)	Weibo	Consumption	Functional value, socialisation value, emotional value, innovativeness value and relationship building value in mobile social media brand pages in China	It includes both transaction-related (e.g. future purchase behaviours, channel preference) and behaviours beyond transactions (e.g. intention to provide feedback to the brand, customer influencer intentions)	Brand
Chiang et al.	2017	Online Questionnaire	(Irretrievable)	Facebook	Contribution	Learning motivation and Collaborative learning in a social network brand community setting in Taiwan	An online user's ongoing and voluntary behaviors that are valuable to a brand company beyond the transaction and that originate from psychologically intrinsic motivation of affect or cognition stimulated by external factors	Brand Community

Leek et al.	2017	Non-participant observation	(Irretrievable)	Twitter	Contribution, Creation, Consumption	Company Type, Linguistic Content, Function in the B2B healthcare sector	It is evidenced via actions such as sharing, advocating and co-developing	Company
Gummerus et al.	2012	Online Survey	(Irretrievable)	Facebook	Contribution, Consumption	Economic benefits, social benefits, entertainment benefits in a gaming brand community	A behavioral manifestation toward the brand or firm that goes beyond transactions, and includes all consumer-to-firm interactions and consumer-to-consumer communications about the brand	Brand Community
Harrigan et al.	2017	Online Survey	(Irretrievable)	Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk)	Contribution, Consumption	Involvement in the Tourism sector	A multi-dimensional construct consisting of three dimensions: cognitive (customer focus and interest in a particular brand), emotional (feelings of inspiration or pride caused by a particular brand) and behavioural (customer effort and energy necessary for interaction with a particular brand)	Crowdsourcing Employment Website
Halaszovich and Nel	2017	Online Questionnaire	(Irretrievable)	Facebook	Contribution	Cognitive processing, affection, activation in students at a tertiary education institution	A consumer's positively valenced brand-related cognitive, emotional and behavioural activity during or related to focal consumer/brand interactions	Brand
Lei et al.	2017	Coding Approach	(Irretrievable)	Facebook	Contribution, Consumption	Media type, content type in an integrated resort industry in Macau	It involves specific interactive experiences between consumers and the brand, and/or other members of the community	Brand
Jayasingh and Venkatesh	2015	Regression Analysis	(Irretrievable)	Facebook	Creation, Contribution, Consumption	Content, frequency in Indian brands	A customer's behavioral manifestation toward a brand or firm	Brand
Simon et al.	2016	Online Survey	(Irretrievable)	Facebook	Contribution	External social forces, internal personal forces in Facebook brand pages	A consumer's behavioural manifestations, such as sharing and socializing with the online brand community on Facebook	Brand

## **Analysis and Discussion**

Five broad antecedent causes were found to influence the exhibition of CEB on social media: (1) Social links; (2) Search for information; (3) Involvement; (4) Functionality; and (5) Ownership-value.

### ***Social Links***

Two articles (Bitter, Kräuter, & Breitenecker, 2014; Bitter & Kräuter, 2016) suggest that the concept of social links is an important factor in the emergence of CEB in social media platforms. This stream of research recognises that customer engagement behaviour, as with all human behaviour, is always embedded in a broader network of social connections than those exhibited in a single transaction. As Bitter & Krauter (2016, p. 227) suggest “brand-related information from close friends is seen as more valuable” to customers. Similarly, Bitter et al., (2014, p. 216) agree from the findings of their study that “interacting with friends ... is a significant antecedent of CEB on social networking sites”. Social links can be defined as the use of social media primarily through the influence of social relationships, friends/family or close social connections. The experiences users have, and the practices users acquire through interacting with friends, have a positive influence on whether users engage behaviourally on social media (Bitter et al., 2014, p. 200). Additionally, businesses/firms and customers are embedded in an ongoing interconnected social relationship or “Tie”- Bitter & Kräuter (2016, p. 222). Thus, social networks are a combination of social connections/ties, through which members of the network obtain access to information and resources of other users on the network. Future empirical scrutiny should be directed toward social links as a situational determinant in the emergence on CEB in social media platforms.

### ***Search for Information***

Three articles (Gummerus, Liljander, Weman, & Pihlström., 2012; Halaszovich & Nel, 2017; Chiang, Wei, Parker, & Davey, 2017) suggest that source of information is an important factor in the emergence of CEB. As Gummerus et al., (2012, p. 87) points out “most customers use the brand community mainly as a source of information, reading messages rather than contributing with likes and comments”. Further support is given to the antecedent of source of information by Halaszovich & Nel (2017, p. 129) who suggest that “two like intentions-engage in WOM and to connect with a brand to receive information are two salient intentions underpinning fan-page like behaviour”. Chiang et al., (2017, p. 1457) further support this conclusion in their study suggesting that “customer learning is critical to explaining both customer’s online behaviour and the formation of CEBs”. A search for information can be defined as the active use of social media for the sole purpose of consuming/seeking brand-related information. It therefore involves a judgement about the quality of information seen on social media, which thus influences subsequent CEBs. The search for information has been studied extensively as part of the consumer decision making model alongside the pre-purchase evaluation of alternatives by customers (see Blackwell, Miniard, & Emgel, 2005). The information search consists of external factors (e.g. reading about products) or internal factors (e.g. remembering product information) about products (Blythe, 2013), so there is a feedback loop of causality from previous interactions that influence future CEBs. Searches are carried out until relevant information is found to meet the need of the consumer (Blythe, 2013). Further attention should be given to how the search for information on social media platforms influences subsequent CEBs, particularly non-transactional CEBs which do not necessarily follow the traditionally-studied linear consumer decision making process.

### ***Involvement***

Three articles (Kabadayi & Price, 2014; Simon, Brexendorf, & Fassnacht, 2016; Harrigan, Evers, Miles, & Daly, 2017) suggest that involvement is an important factor in the emergence of CEB. From their study, Simon et al., (2016, p. 417) note that “internal personal forces predominantly influence consumers brand community engagement”. Additionally, other traits of involvement are shown by Kabadayi & Price (2014, p. 217) to influence CEB, for example “personality traits affect individuals’ mode of interaction which in turn determines if they like and/or comment on a post in a brand’s Facebook page”. The concept of involvement as an antecedent of CEB in social media platforms is further supported by Harrigan et al., (2017, p. 605) “brands must use social media among other channels to elicit involvement with their brand if they seek to engage with consumers effectively”. Involvement can be defined as the perceived relevance of an object (e.g. a brand) based on a person’s inherent needs, values and interests (Zaichowsky, 1985). It also involves the degree to which an individual feels attached to a brand or product, as well as the loyalty felt towards it (Blythe, 2013). In relation to CEB, involvement consists of a brand’s level of meaning, appeal and value projected to its customers. What is unclear from the research is how involvement modifies qualitatively distinct CEBs such as consumption, contribution or creation, though it is possible that each respective state exhibits a heightened sense of involvement. We therefore suggest that future studies identify the relative effects involvement has on facilitating different levels of CEB in customers on social media.

### ***Functionality***

Three articles (Lei, Pratt, & Wang, 2017; Leek, Houghton, & Canning, 2017; Carlson, Rahman, Voola, & De Vries 2018) suggest that functionality is an important factor in the emergence of CEB in social media platforms. Functionality can be defined as any aspect of social media platform design which has the quality of being suited to serve a particular CEB well. This can involve the usability, interface, content and attractiveness to users in order to enable some form of engagement from customers. As Carlson et al., (2018, p.89) note “four online-service characteristics; content quality, brand page interactivity, brand page sociability and customer contact quality, indirectly drive CEB intentions”. This finding is supported by Lei et al., (2017, p.326) who suggest “the use of either images or videos in branded content in SNS can drive a higher level of customer engagement in terms of number of likes”. In line with this, Leek et al., (2017, p. 12) concludes that “tweet functions and the language used in the content of messages interacts with company type to affect behavioral engagement in terms of likes, tweets and comments”. Sociability is one notable characteristic of functionality found in social media platforms. It is experienced by customers through mutual interactions on platforms. This facilitates the communication of shared interests, values and discussions pertaining to a brand leading to the formation of online brand communities and a form of social cohesiveness (Zhang, Lu, Wang, & Wu, 2015). Additionally, personal and interactive engagement are also key in the functionality of a social media channel in the formation of CEB. Personal engagement is shown to form through subscribing, liking brand-content through stimulation, or as inspiration that affirms self-worth. Interactive engagement involves participating and socializing e.g. call to win posts (Oh, Roumani, Nwankpa, & Hu, 2017). Further attention should be directed toward exploring how different social media platform functionalities (e.g. Pinterest, Instagram, Facebook) enables the formation of CEBs based on varying sentiment and valence of consumer emotional responses.

### ***Ownership-Value***

Two articles (Carlson, Rahman, Taylor, & Voola, 2017; Gong, 2018) suggest that ownership-value are important factors in the emergence of CEB. Ownership-value can be defined as engagement by customers due to post-purchase additional value that emerges after acquisition of the brand/product. As Gong (2018, p. 294) suggests “brand value co-creation, which is conceptualized as customer brand engagement behavior, is driven by customer brand ownership and bounded by customers’ cultural value orientation”. Additionally, Carlson et al., (2017, p. 10) supports the antecedent of ownership-value in their study and assert that the formation of VIBE (‘value in the brand page experience’) “has a positive direct effect on satisfaction and CEBs”. The VIBE construct refers to the various affective and utilitarian components that emerge from the interactions between the brand and the consumer, including interactions with customer’s social network and other customers (Carlson et al., 2017, p. 3).

The functional value of the VIBE construct includes a customer having the right of access to helpful, useful and practical content. The socialisation value component involves the utility derived by a customer from meeting, communicating and interacting with other members of a social media brand page (Carlson et al., 2017, p. 4). Aspects of the emotional value are gained by the customer from generating affective responses during the consumption experience (Carlson et al., 2017, p. 4). Innovativeness value manifests through consumers’ observation of company activities to form a judgement of a brand’s overall innovativeness. This can have an impact on the consumer’s perceived quality judgements, satisfaction and consumer loyalty (Kunz, Schmitt, & Meyer, 2011). Finally, relationship building value deals with the experience derived by the customer from the brand’s efforts in a social media brand page to deliver and create an ongoing relational and beneficial experience (Carlson et al., 2017, p. 5). Further research should examine how brand ownership influences different post-purchase CEBs exhibited in social media platforms.

Overall, the five broad antecedent causes shown to influence CEBs in social media platforms prove to be an important finding in the engagement literature. It is suggested that further enquiry into the relationship between antecedents should be undertaken in order to further develop the CEB construct.

### **Areas for Future Research**

The review highlights that CEB is a burgeoning and vital subject for researchers interested in adopting an integrative and extensive approach to understanding consumer behaviour. However, three epistemological tensions have been identified within the literature by analysing the results across the classification scheme shown in Table 2. These tensions need to be explicitly addressed if the CEB construct is to be properly operationalised for consistent further study:

### ***Universal Definition of CEB***

Various attempts have been made by researchers to define CEB, however the most commonly cited definition in the corpus relies upon the work of van Doorn et al., (2010, p. 254) as “a customer’s behavioural manifestation that have a brand or firm focus, beyond purchase, resulting from motivational drivers”. Additionally, only two studies from the included papers highlight the multi-dimensionality of the engagement construct involving a cognitive, emotional and behavioural dimension (Harrigan et al., 2017; Halaszovich & Nel, 2017). Although, definitions acknowledging the existence of cognitive, emotional and behavioural dimensions are widely used in other work on customer engagement. Carlson et al., (2017, p.

2) base their definition of CEB on Kumar, Aksoy, Donkers, Venkatesan, Wiesel, & Tillmanns (2010) argument, that engagement behaviours include both transaction-related and behaviours beyond transaction. Deviating from van Doorn et al. (2010) as not only “beyond purchase” but including transaction-related behaviours such as future purchase behaviours and channel preference. Leek et al. (2017), Lei et al., (2017) & Chiang et al., (2017) definitions are all guided by Brodie, Ilic, Juric, & Hollebeek (2013) in that CEB consists of “specific interactive experiences”, “sharing, advocating and co-developing” and “ongoing and voluntary behaviours that originate from psychologically intrinsic motivation”.

From the assessment of the included papers, it can be concluded that there is a need to develop a single, universal definition of CEB that can be operationalised across multiple contexts. The failure of the discipline to achieve consensus is perhaps due to a deeper issue: a lack of explicit engagement with research philosophy.

### ***Underlying Research Philosophy***

A philosophical position i.e. research philosophy, worldview, paradigm (see Creswell, 2009) is concerned with a set of basic beliefs known as *metaphysics* which deals with first principles. It is generally represented as a worldview that defines for the researcher, the nature of the world, an individual's place within it and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). The corpus highlights different factors that drive CEB and its outcomes, but most papers identified in this review have not explicitly emphasised a philosophical position in their writing (though this may be due to a lack of requirement within many marketing journals). Table 2 shows that though competing theoretical positions are advanced, research philosophy is not stated clearly by CEB researchers, and that a wide range of associated focal engagement objects have been studied. This is likely what causes a failure to achieve consensus in definition because researchers are not defining their philosophical position and are consequently importing ontological presuppositions tacitly into selected research methods. Hatch & Cunliffe (2006) draw attention to the fact that different research paradigms can encourage researchers to study a phenomenon from different perspectives. For example, the idea of behavioural engagement presupposes an ‘object’ which a customer can engage with. The corpus illustrates that these engagement objects are variously conceptualised in the literature as ‘brands’, ‘companies’, ‘communities’, and ‘websites’. These objects are treated as though they have the same status as each other, but to what extent is engagement with a ‘community’ equivalent to engagement with a ‘brand’ or a ‘product’? We argue that community only exists insofar as people engage with each other, whereas a product would continue to exist regardless of whether an audience was found for it. It is important to consider this simple ontological issue for the CEB research paradigm, because these presuppositions are fundamental to the interpretation of broader claims about reality and truth. As Blaikie (2000) argues, if metatheoretical consensus is not achieved within scientific discourse, the broader field of results will be undermined through lack of coherence. It is therefore suggested that future research should consider developing a deeper ontology for the engagement paradigm, specifically to differentiate between the process of engagement for different focal objects.

### ***Methodological Pluralism***

The lack of research philosophy integration into CEB research has the added consequence that contemporary work has not benefitted from the breadth of methodological innovation that such a recent phenomenon as social media might permit.

The majority of the studies included in the review that have explored CEB in the context of social media are based solely on quantitative research reflecting only a statistical, non-exploratory snapshot of CEB. This is likely due to the favouring of positivist and behaviourist research methods across those journals that have published research on CEB. As the concept of CEB evolves and intensifies overtime (Bowden, 2009) it is suggested that future research should consider conducting an explorative method of research to expand the CEB literature, as well as to provide further longitudinal insight into the causal determinants of CEB emergence and habitual behaviour formation.

## **Conclusion**

The systematic review of relevant empirical articles has illustrated that there are at least five key antecedent causes, which need to be considered when developing social media marketing strategies that encourage CEB. Overall, the review helps readers understand the relationship of CEB in social media research achieved to date so far and demonstrates a number of research limitations that are worthy of further exploration for future research. However, the results of the review have identified 3 epistemological tensions within the literature that need to be explicitly addressed for further study: The lack of universal definition; the dearth of research philosophy cited within the corpus; and the absence of qualitative exploratory work. These all need to be addressed in order to strengthen the conceptualisation and operationalisation of the CEB construct.

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